Ahmad Sa'adat

part one

...lives in prison, but prison does not live in him. He writes about everyone – yet never about himself. Though deeply entangled in the inferno of the occupation's prisons, he witnesses israeli fascism as it relentlessly practices repression & brutality, seeking to crush the imprisoned human being & strip their life of meaning. Imprisoned comrade, fighter, & General Secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, his words written from behind bars tell us that a human being, through their belonging, their values, and the justice of their cause, is stronger than the prison & all instruments of repression & disintegration. Read. Act.

ECHOES of the Shackles

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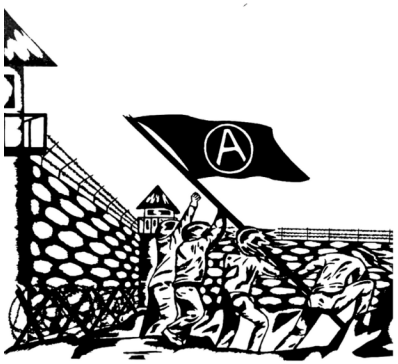
with whatever weapons at hand



Dedication

To all those who have suffered and continue to suffer, or who have faced and continue to face oppression, injustice, tyranny, torture, isolation, and discrimination —

Among them, my comrades along the path, both the martyrs and the living. . .

To my mother and father, my wife, my brothers and sisters, and my daughters and sons who have endured the hardship of my absence with me.

And especially to my martyred brother Mohammad, who was martyred standing tall and refused to be anything but an equal.

Joy Is Born from the Depth of Pain

Joy is born from the depth of pain, and words ring out from the heart of silence. The voice of Ahmad Sa'adat emerges from behind the cold, harsh door of a prison cell — a door the occupier intended as a tool to break the will of a fighter who believes in freedom and justice for all, without discrimination of any kind.

Through powerful, moving stories, he brings hope and joy to light up the darkness of solitary confinement. He gives new meaning to the words of Palestinian poet Taha Muhammad Ali: "And the silence was as solid as a millstone." In Ahmad Sa'adat's experience, the silence of isolation becomes a millstone that grinds pain and oppression until warmth is born from the stories of Hassan, Jamal, Marwan, Mahmoud, Ibrahim, Abbas — and even Yigal. Solitary confinement becomes a furnace of repression that melts down ethnic, cultural, and political differences to forge a human being who resists oppression, discrimination, and racism.

Ahmad chooses to share a personal experience of nearly three years in solitary confinement through the stories of those he encountered in isolation — stories and events that reflect the details of this punitive policy, which has long ceased to be a seasonal punishment and instead become a pillar of a systematic structure of physical and psychological torture. This system has been developed over decades by the Israeli Prison Service to break the spirit of Palestinian political prisoners and force their submission.

He details how this policy is implemented, along with other accompanying punitive measures against those held in isolation: denial of family visits, banning of books and newspapers, prohibition of fresh food, refusal to allow prisoners to purchase necessities from the prison canteen, banning of communication with other inmates — especially when held in solitary confinement — and other forms of torment that have been refined by torturers to the point of absurdity, often enacted by a foolish officer or official seeking to satisfy a sadistic urge for revenge.

chirping of birds, or the barking of dogs. The sight of snow or frost, a turtle trying to steal food from a garden, watching a tree grow in a home garden, or the blooming of a pomegranate flower in another garden—all these vanish. In solitary confinement, the sense of time and its divisions disappears: the feeling of night and day, summer and winter, morning and evening, the moon, stars, and fog—all vanish. All signs of social life disappear. Many terms vanish from the isolated prisoner's internal vocabulary, just like the words "uncle," "aunt," "brother," "nephew," and "niece" disappeared from the Chinese dictionary due to the improbability of families consisting of two siblings.

Isolation punishment causes severe physical and psychological harm to the isolated prisoners because isolating them and separating them from their social environment inside prison and their outside world constitutes a harsh and cruel violation of their civil rights as human beings. It turns their imprisonment period into a journey fraught with death and danger, especially for those who have spent more than one year in isolation.

In isolation, psychological damages increase for the prisoner, including sleep disorders, depression, fear, mental disturbances, visual and auditory hallucinations, loss of awareness of time and place, acute confusion, and thought disorders. Isolation likely triggers and exacerbates dormant psychological and physical problems, which may emerge during and after isolation.

Isolation conditions lead to intense psychological stress and may cause even those without previous mental disorders or those in a balanced mental state to lose their balance and develop new disorders. This manifests in various symptoms. Prisoners subjected to isolation may suffer from certain mental illnesses at a higher rate than non-isolated prisoners. The most common disorders include adaptation difficulties and depressive syndromes, but serious dissociative and psychotic disorders can also occur among isolated prisoners who had no prior illness.

Despite this, the isolated prisoner resists this imminent threat to his body. Emotional longing grows stronger, isolation triggers nostalgia for his social and human vocabulary, and strengthens his attachment to his social past, hoping it will provide an emotional source to help him overcome his present experience.

This is not a personal memoir, but the intimate stirrings of a heart that beats with love for life. Ahmad does not dwell deeply on the personal timeline of his harshest moments of solitude during those years. Instead, he prefers to speak collectively. And for those who know this stubborn and dedicated man, his avoidance of individualism is no surprise. Still, I believe he should eventually dedicate space to such a journey — into the depths of boundless silence — and take us through the corridors of a spirit unbreakable, even when imprisoned in the darkness of a cell hiding a snake inside.

The policy of isolation in the occupation's prisons is not limited to punishing a prisoner by placing them in a separate cell within a designated isolation ward. The Israeli occupation began isolating Palestinian prisoners from their reality when it decided to transfer all prisoners and detainees into prisons inside Israel — a violation of international humanitarian law. The Prison Service at times segregated specific groups of prisoners — separating Palestinians from '48 and Jerusalem from those of the West Bank and Gaza, isolating prisoners with life sentences in Nafha desert prison, and placing leaders of the prison movement or those deemed "dangerous" by the Prison Service in a special isolation section in Hadarim Prison.

The goal has always been to reshape the consciousness of individuals and groups within the prison movement — to encourage individualism, entrap prisoners in their personal struggles, and dismantle the unity of the prison movement as a collective resistance against the jailer's oppression. But the Palestinian prisoner movement has proven innovative in developing methods of communication and resistance to counter these policies, safeguarding the psychological and physical well-being of both the individual prisoner and the collective, and continuing their struggle against all the grave violations committed by the Israeli Prison Service against thousands of Palestinian detainees.

The reality of the Palestinian prisoner movement is no different from the reality of Palestinians outside prison walls, where the prison extends across the Gaza Strip — home to more than a million and a half Palestinians who have been isolated for years. Thousands of families have been cut off from their land and surroundings by an apartheid wall in the West Bank.

And yet, we continue to dream of a better tomorrow — of a day when the prison walls will fall, when we will embrace the sun of freedom, and bask in the warmth of joy.

Sahar Francis
Addameer Prisoner Support and Human Rights Association

manage to get along well.

Generally, shared life between two prisoners fosters a type of refined spiritual relationship with a strong human dimension. It creates the highest forms of friendship, imbued with shared suffering and experience. A common social language and human feeling emerge, and this shared life often extends to weaving relationships between their families outside prison.

Relations with other prisoners in isolation sections are usually minimal due to the prison's structural design, which prevents prisoners from communicating with each other. Prisoners may spend years in the section without seeing one another, even though daily attempts are made to create some form of social communication among the isolated community. This communication is usually limited to secret conversations exchanged through the back windows of the cells, sometimes requiring prisoners to stand on a chair if the windows are high up on the wall. These exchanges may include long political, social, or intellectual discussions. Sometimes, prisoners invent jokes and inject humor, which is much needed to relieve the harsh reality of isolation.

Despite this, prisoners are aware that the prison administration and the intelligence service behind it aim to strip the detainee of his mind and healthy body. Therefore, prisoners constantly care for their bodies by exercising daily and keep their minds active by staying informed about current events, reading, and other activities. However, during the initial months of isolation, the prisoner often suffers from social and psychological alienation. The most dangerous issue during isolation is the decline in mental capacities and sensory abilities, such as forgetfulness, distraction, and reduced concentration or attention. Therefore, prisoners always request the Red Cross to provide new books and mental games to stimulate the mind.

Over the years, the isolated prisoner loses his connection to nature, becoming a stranger to a tree, with his eyes longing to see it, the moon, a star, a cat wandering around the house, or even the house itself or the street. For those from refugee camps, the camp alleys become unfamiliar, and their details fade day by day.

In solitary confinement, all aspects of life disappear. Joy may vanish, along with the feeling of pleasure from the rain, sunrise or sunset, the

and the prisoner's number is prominently displayed at the top in red if he is a security prisoner, and in black if he is a criminal prisoner. The card has small boxes indicating the prisoner's condition if he is sick or violent, and reasons for his isolation if related to behavior inside or outside the prison. If the recommendations come from intelligence, the box is left blank. Instructions are provided on how to handle the prisoner in terms of how restraints should be applied (front or back) and what items or belongings are allowed or prohibited, such as television or other items. To prevent other inmates from knowing the occupant of the cell, the administration places a black curtain over the ID card box.

Psychological & Social Situation

As we mentioned earlier, isolation takes two main forms: the first is individual isolation, which is the hardest, and the second is double isolation. Although the latter is preferable, it can sometimes be even more difficult. This depends on the ability of the two prisoners to harmonize in a highly confined shared life, their identity as detainees, and their political and intellectual affiliations. Although the law allows a prisoner to choose to live alone in a cell or to select the person they share the cell with, prison administrations usually do not adhere to these rules and typically impose cellmates arbitrarily, without regard for either party's preference.

Despite differences in social, intellectual, political, and organizational backgrounds between cellmates, they mostly manage to create a shared life. However, some prefer to live alone due to incompatibility with their partner, clashing temperaments, desires, and ideas to a degree that makes shared life impossible—though this is exceptional. Sometimes one isolated prisoner with a mental disorder is placed with another prisoner who is inexperienced and unfamiliar with communal life in prison sections. This lack of shared habits and temperament can lead to an inability to coexist.

The stability and harmony between cellmates depend on their social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. Some have the ability to adapt, are open to living with others, and understand the objective and subjective necessity of this. Others do not. Sometimes, even prisoners from the same organization with the same political and intellectual ideas clash, while others from different organizations with different ideas and beliefs

Ahmad Sa'adat lives the prison, but the prison does not live within him. He writes about everyone — yet never about himself. Though deeply entangled in the inferno of the occupation's prisons, he witnesses Israeli fascism as it relentlessly practices repression and brutality, seeking to crush the imprisoned human being and strip their life of meaning.

He is the imprisoned comrade and struggler Ahmad Sa'adat, Secretary-General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He penned these words from behind bars, drawing from his experience in the solitary confinement cells in which he was thrown for many long years — shedding light on one of the most brutal forms of torture practiced against prisoners: solitary confinement. This is not a simple disciplinary measure, but a punitive and vengeful policy aimed at eroding the prisoner's national spirit, their identity as a struggler, and their very humanity.

Comrade Sa'adat shines a light on what takes place in those tombs known as isolation cells. He exposes the occupation state as one that violates all humanitarian and legal norms. He opens the doors of solitary confinement to reveal the martyrs who died in its silence and darkness, and the prisoners who developed psychological and neurological illnesses after years of isolation. He tells stories of extraordinary resilience — of isolated prisoners who found companionship in the moon, in birds, in rays of sunlight — breaking their isolation and the occupier's plans. Sa'adat writes that solitary confinement is a policy of plunging the prisoner into another world, surrounded and fenced in by harsh procedures, with the goal of devouring the body itself — causing it to fade, vanish, fracture — until the prisoner becomes a victim of the guards' whims, reduced to nothing more than a number.

From this remote grave, comrade Sa'adat tells us that solitary confinement is a systematic Israeli practice since the beginning of the occupation. It is a guillotine for executing prisoners psychologically and socially, fully sanctioned by the occupation government and its judiciary — a tool for crushing the will of freedom fighters, stripping them of their humanity, and humiliating them. It is more grotesque than war crimes defined as torture. It is a form of slow killing — inflicted throughout the prisoner's time in isolation, buried beneath harsh, degrading procedures that target the prisoner's dignity and treat them as less than human.

Comrade Sa'adat lives in prison, but the prison does not live in him.

He has given his suffering a new meaning — one of life. He has not allowed them to shut his inner self, his principles, and his convictions, even though they have locked him away and deprived him of light and air. As a struggler, he has distinguished himself by always pointing toward something greater — something beyond himself. He has risen above his own ego, for a human being is more than a soul, more than breath — we are capable of resistance. And that is why the policy of solitary confinement has failed to break the determination of the prisoners. On the contrary, it has become a site of confrontation with the jailers and torturers — and the prisoners have achieved tremendous victories in their defiance of this policy.

Comrade Sa'adat addresses international human rights organizations and calls on them to visit the hidden frontlines of the occupation state — to go deep into the isolation cells that are not just places of separation, but of continuous punishment: denial of family visits, newspapers, purchases, communication — even with nature itself. He urges them to witness the place where the jailer seeks to transform the prisoner into a mechanical being, devoid of life — or at best, a mere biological entity, through a regime of daily prohibitions.

In his writing, comrade Sa'adat exposes Israeli racism, as well as the madness and stupidity that have turned many Israelis into automated beings, stripped of any ethical or human dimension in their treatment of Palestinian prisoners. These Israelis, consumed by obsession and fear, see every prisoner as a threat to their security and existence, inventing hellish methods to erase, silence, and target the prisoner — nationally, politically, and humanly. Comrade Sa'adat, who calls upon us to uphold national unity, to strengthen our revolutionary convictions in the face of Israeli policies, to boycott the occupation's courts, and to intensify international pressure and media campaigns in support of the prisoners and in exposing Israeli policy toward them on all levels and platforms — believes firmly that the beast of solitary confinement will never devour a people striving for freedom, dignity, independence, and liberation.

Comrade Sa'adat has lived the prison, but the prison has not lived within him. He has not allowed their bayonets to pierce his chest and reduce him to lifeless matter. He has not let the prison seep into his soul. He draws strength from his convictions, which tell him that, at every

search process can take about three hours, during which the prisoner remains handcuffed and shackled. The goal of such searches is certainly to disturb and humiliate the isolated prisoner.

Counting (head-counts) is conducted three times a day: morning, noon, and evening.

Food is distributed three times a day: breakfast, lunch, and dinner. It is given to the prisoner through the central opening in the door, which is also the same opening through which the prisoner's hands are restrained.

Exercise time is carried out with the prisoner restrained and the restraints are removed only after entering the exercise yard. In some cases, isolated prisoners are restrained by the hands (sometimes tied behind the back) and feet throughout their exercise time, which lasts one hour in all isolation sections.

Overall, the isolation sections are separated from the rest of the prison sections, and the isolated prisoner is also isolated from his fellow isolated prisoners in the same section. Exchange of belongings between isolated prisoners is forbidden, as well as meeting or interacting with others. Often, the guard deliberately invents excuses to impose additional punishments on the prisoner, including solitary confinement punishments, confiscation of electrical devices and television from the cell, or other penalties. The accusations are usually trivial, such as passing a cigarette to another prisoner by throwing it into the exercise yard or making statements to the media during court appearances.

The guard also deliberately keeps the isolated prisoner in a constant state of tension and instability by transferring him every six months from one isolation section to another. This transfer is accompanied by suffering during transportation in prison vehicles, which consist of a series of narrow iron cells that fit only one person. Additionally, the prisoner suffers while waiting in court waiting rooms, being kept alone without contact with other prisoners.

Indeed, transfers are a form of torture and harassment on the nerves of the transferred prisoner, who usually remains handcuffed and shackled during the trip.

To determine how to deal with the prisoner and assess his level of danger, the prison administration places an identification card next to the door of each cell showing the prisoner inside. The card carries his photo,

Asqalan or Ohlei Kedar isolation sections.

Isolation Section in Gilboa

The cells are designed in the style of Rimon's isolation rooms and do not differ in conditions or treatment. However, each room contains four beds (each two-tiered), which reduces the space available. Sometimes, isolation sections in Shata prison—or Rimonim—referred to as the "Ashbal" section, are used to isolate some political prisoners for short periods due to overcrowding in other isolation sections.

Isolation Section of Nafha Desert Prison (Daily Life Procedures)

It is certain that the procedures followed in the isolation sections aim to achieve a permanent state of punishment for the prisoner to destroy his convictions and principles. The prisoner lives in a constant state of alert throughout his isolation period, which in many cases lasts up to thirteen years.

Throughout his isolation period, he is treated as dangerous and a "Superman" who poses a constant threat to those around him. His hands and feet are restrained whenever the door to his cell is opened, whether to go out for exercise, visit the doctor, receive visits, meet with the administration, the Red Cross, the lawyer, go to court, or when soldiers enter the cell for routine daily searches. This happens multiple times daily.

The restraining is done through the openings in the door, where there is an opening at hand level and another at foot level. The hands may be tied either behind or in front of the prisoner.

The cell is searched twice daily, in the morning and afternoon, to inspect the condition of the cell. Of course, during each search, the prisoner's hands and feet are restrained. Sometimes the cell is searched late at night. There are types of searches involving a lot of intimidation carried out by specialized units in raids and searches such as "Druze," "Metzada," and "Nahshon." These searches are usually sudden, and the prisoner is often physically searched by being stripped of his clothes. The

difficult juncture, he does not represent only himself — but all his people. For a human being, through their belonging, their values, and the justice of their cause, is stronger than the jailer and all the instruments of repression and disintegration. Comrade Sa'adat lives the prison, but the prison does not live within him. A human being is capable of preserving their spiritual freedom and the independence of their mind even in the most horrific conditions of psychological and physical pressure — refusing to be molded by the occupier's system inside the prison walls.

As Comrade Sa'adat confronts solitary confinement as a system of execution and annihilation against prisoners, he tells us: the inner strength of the imprisoned person can elevate them above the limits of their physical reality. There is meaning in suffering and pain — they are a part of life, and without them, human life is incomplete. Sa'adat does not see the outside world or the future through the eyes of a broken or dead man, as the jailer would hope, but rather through the eyes of a free and rebellious human being.

Issa Qaraqe
Head of the Commission for Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs

Echoes of the Shackles

part one

صدى القيد

Ahmad Sa'adat

2017

The isolation section consists of two wings, each containing five rooms opening in one direction onto a relatively spacious exercise yard. The two yards are separated by a high wall about seven meters tall, which makes communication between prisoners difficult.

One of the problems in this section is that the lawyer's visiting room and the clinic are located about 500 meters away from the cells, so prisoners have to walk there while shackled by their hands and feet.

Isolation Section in Ramla: Nitsan

Opened in 1989, this section was closed in 1992 but was reopened again by the prison administration in 1996.

This section is characterized by harsh treatment and poor health conditions. It consists of twenty facing rooms, each with a bathroom and toilet located at the beginning of the room, facing each other. Each room contains a typical two-tiered stone bed. The door is made of reinforced metal. There is only a small window measuring 10 × 10 cm and a food slot. At the top of the front wall, there is a small window overlooking the corridor, meaning ventilation is provided through an exhaust fan.

In a space of 9 square meters, the room is cramped with a television, refrigerator, dining table, chair, prisoner's belongings, and an electric hotplate used by prisoners to prepare their food, along with eating utensils. The room is designed to hinder social interaction and communication between rooms, which can only occur with great difficulty through the small window at the top of the front wall.

The section opens onto a narrow exercise yard, no larger than 4 m × 5 m. Prisoners are shackled from behind when their cell is opened for daily inspection, or when going out to the prison yard, clinic, or lawyer visits.

Isolation Section in Sharon

This prison is rarely used to isolate political prisoners, and usually, the number held there is limited. It is located in the old Sharon prison building, built in the English style. Its cells do not differ from those in

of the Ashkelon isolation rooms after their modifications and follows the same system, with the difference that the window at the end of the room is wider, lower, and less complex. The section opens onto two adjacent yards, each with the same area as the yard in Ashkelon. A major problem in this section is the widespread presence of rats, which are active at night and force the detainees to cover the windows with cloth to prevent them from entering the rooms.

2. Eshl Be'er Sheva Isolation Section (Section 6), this section contains sixteen rooms built in the old style, each with the same area as the Ashkelon rooms before modification. The floor is made of cement, which is difficult to clean. Each room has a window measuring 70 cm by 40 cm, covered with mesh, facing a high fence that blocks sunlight and airflow. The section opens onto two exercise yards accessed by a single corridor, each yard measuring 6 meters by 6 meters.

Each two detainees are held in a cell no larger than 15 square meters (3m × 5m), which contains a toilet and a sink. The ventilation is poor and the only window is very small, measuring no more than 50 cm × 70 cm, and is covered by three layers of iron bars. Beyond the window is a sheet of metal that effectively blocks about 40% of sunlight from entering the cell. The prisoners spend 23 hours a day inside and are only allowed to go out for exercise (the "fura" or yard) for one hour, all while their hands and feet are shackled.

3. "Senuqa" Isolation, these are coffin-like cells, barely the size of a sleeping mat, completely closed off without ventilation or lighting. The detainee cannot move inside; they sleep with their head against the wall and their feet at the door.

4. Rimon Prison Isolation, a modern building with more spacious cells that have good lighting and ventilation. Each room is about 460 cm long and 300 cm wide, attached to a corridor that is 180 cm long and 1 meter wide. Additionally, there is a bathroom and toilet in a square room measuring 150 cm × 150 cm, featuring a sink with a shiny metal mirror above it, and a ventilation and suction device since there is no window in the bathroom.

At the front, there is a metal door with a closed window of 30 cm × 40 cm in the lower third. As usual, there is a ventilation opening in the middle of the door used to pass food, which is common in prison doors and serves various purposes, mainly to restrain the prisoner before removing them from the cell. Opposite the door is a window about 1 square meter in size, facing a high fence that blocks air from entering.

I. A General Historical Framework of the Policy of Isolation

Since Israel completed its occupation of the rest of Palestine—that is, with its occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967—the Palestinian national prison movement began to take shape, becoming a continuation of the existence of prisoners that preceded this date. The prisons left behind by Jordanian and Egyptian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza were already full, in addition to the detention centers established during the British Mandate in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948.

In the early stages, Israel resorted to arresting people in search of weapons or to gather intelligence files left by Egyptian and Jordanian authorities in the West Bank and Gaza. It began pursuing members of political parties and individuals from the Palestinian Liberation Army in Gaza. With the launch of the resistance movement, Israel widened its campaign of pursuing fedayeen fighters who crossed borders from Jordan or Egypt, as well as local cells formed from party members, organized groups, and student bodies.

Within just a few months of the new occupation, the prisons became full. In its policy framework, Israel relied on British emergency laws, which gave it the authority to detain anyone suspected of having ties to the resistance or of being involved with political parties—regardless of the nature or scale of their activity. Whether there was enough evidence to prosecute them or not, administrative detention (based on the British Mandate's emergency regulations) awaited them with no delay.

There were no legal standards in place. A suspect could spend many months in interrogation cells without access to family visits, lawyers, or

even the Red Cross. Judges were permitted to extend the detention of any suspect appearing before them for one month at a time, renewable for up to three months. In some cases, interrogation periods could be extended for up to six consecutive months.

Detainees were often brought before the courts without legal representation, especially since the Jordanian Bar Association had at that time issued a binding resolution requiring its members to boycott Israeli courts. Furthermore, the Israeli authorities used administrative detention without any limitations—even if there were some indications of guilt, but not enough to issue severe sentences.

These measures were taken within a broader preconceived plan to carry out mass deportations. Between 1970 and 1971, hundreds of Palestinian activists who were held under administrative detention were deported to Jordan.

As the resistance movement expanded and became more structured, the number of Palestinian and Arab detainees in Israeli prisons began to increase steadily and dramatically.

In implementing this policy, Israel resorted to solitary confinement for extended periods, often lasting several months, with the purpose of continuing interrogation of detainees. Multiple facilities were used for this, including police stations within the Green Line, Shin Bet (intelligence) centers in what were referred to as governorates, as well as military centers formerly under Jordanian or Egyptian control, which had been occupied. In addition, some military prisons were used to interrogate those considered high-risk resistance fighters, particularly members of commando units who had crossed the borders from Jordan or Egypt.

Detention centers such as Sarafand, Atlit, and Nabi Saleh military prisons were used. In these facilities, detainees were held in extremely harsh isolation conditions, subjected to various forms of torture, including:

- *Hanging by the hands from the ceiling*
- *Beatings of all kinds*
- *Electric shocks*
- *Exposure to cold or scalding water*
- *Use of attack dogs*

completely sealed. The floor, walls, and door of this cell are covered with insulating wood to prevent the prisoner from harming himself.

In every section, there is an exercise yard (called "fura"), where a prisoner spends one hour alone if isolated singly, or together with the other prisoner if they share the same cell. The size of this yard varies from one prison to another. The worst is the exercise yard of Ayalon Ramla isolation, which does not exceed 4.5 square meters and is difficult for sunlight to reach. All these yards share the feature of having a roof shaded by two layers of metal.

Isolation Section in Ashkelon

This section consists of fourteen rooms of equal size, each measuring 290 cm in length and 120 cm in width. Each room contains a bathroom with a toilet measuring 80 cm long and 70 cm wide. There is a window on the front wall of the room measuring 40 cm wide and 50 cm high, covered on the inside by iron mesh and on the outside by thick iron bars. Between the two is a sheet metal covering that partially blocks the window. The door is made of reinforced sheet metal with a small square window measuring 10 × 10 cm, which usually remains closed.

The section opens onto an exercise yard measuring 8 meters long and 5 meters wide, adjacent to a corridor 120 cm wide and 340 cm long. Some renovations have been made to this section, including adding a hallway about [*width missing in original*] along the length of the room, relocating the bathroom and toilet there, and opening a narrow window at the end of the room. This space contains a television and a small refrigerator. The purpose of having the refrigerator inside the room is not for luxury but to prevent prisoners from using a communal refrigerator, which could facilitate communication and cooperation between inmates. On the wall opposite the bed, there is a cabinet with eight square compartments for storing belongings. This room is typically designed to accommodate two people, though rarely it is used for just one.

Be'er Sheva Prison includes three isolation sections, as follows:

1. Ohali Kedar Isolation Section (Section 8), also called the "Open Isolation" Opened in 1992, this section contains 8 isolation rooms. The size of each room is equal to that

cm apart, and the second is a layer of strong metal mesh "squares" with steel rods measuring about 3 cm by 3 cm. In front of these is a movable glass frame to control the cell's ventilation.

Some cells, like those in the old and new Ramla (Ayalon) prison isolation units, have dark walls with no external windows at all—considered the worst type of cell. These cells block out sunlight, moonlight, and starlight and prevent air renewal due to the absence of any ventilation openings. These cells only have small rectangular windows about 30 cm wide located above the door and close to the ceiling.

The administration provides a sponge mattress, which has recently been replaced with a non-flammable type after repeated cases of prisoners, both Arab and Jewish criminals, setting fires. Some cells have a plastic chair and a small table, depending on the cell size. These tables may be plastic, concrete, or wooden, fixed in one corner for cooking or writing purposes. Older cells lack all these amenities.

In some cells, there is also a plastic bucket used for washing, a toilet brush and a small mirror fixed above the washbasin, and some poor-quality blankets. The isolated prisoner must purchase a scrubbing brush himself. As for the television, electric fan, small refrigerator, electric stove (a small electric hotplate), electric water heater, and transistor radio—these have only started to be provided since 2008, and prisoners usually buy these devices at their own expense.

Each isolation section has a main corridor (a "corridor") with cells distributed along both sides. The internal corridor of the Ayalon Ramla prison isolation section is considered the worst among isolation corridors in other prisons, measuring about 15 meters wide and 50 meters long. Surveillance cameras are widespread throughout all the corridors and corners of the isolation sections, in the exercise yard, in the corridors, and in the visitation rooms. Some cameras are even installed inside certain cells, but these are reserved for difficult cases, violent prisoners toward guards or other inmates, those who have attempted suicide, or those suffering from psychological or neurological illnesses. This is called "Seniuka isolation," referring to the harshest and most isolated place. Usually, prisoners placed there are being punished for certain violations. The place is stripped of everything except the mattress and blanket; the wall surrounding the bathroom and toilet is removed and its window

• *Deprivation of food and sleep*
• *Stress positions (shabeh)*

. . .and many other methods that interrogators perfected—some stemming from their own experience, and others imported from global repressive intelligence systems, such as the SAVAK (Iran under the Shah) and apartheid South Africa.

As the prisoner movement grew, the Israeli Prison Authority began to apply various forms of collective isolationbased on the detainee's case file and sentence. For instance:

• *Detention centers in Palestinian cities were designated for detainees serving less than one year.*
• *Nablus Central Prison was used for detainees from that governorate serving less than five years.*
• *Beersheba Prison was designated for sentences between five and ten years.*
• *Ashkelon Prison was assigned to those sentenced to ten years or more.*
• *The latter was reserved for those with very high or life sentences.*

Upon arrival, prisoners faced the harshest forms of torture from day one. They were placed in solitary confinement cells for varying durations to break their spirit, humiliate them, and force submission. Detainees were even required to address their interrogators with "Sir" after every response. For example:

"What is your name?"
"Mohammed, Sir."
"Where are you from?"
"From Ramallah, Sir."

Simultaneously, detainees from Jerusalem and from the part of Palestine occupied in 1948 were segregated in Ramleh Prison, which had been specially prepared for this purpose. Additional detention centers were used as well. This isolation policy remained in effect until 1978.

As for solitary confinement legalized under Israeli law, it functioned as a preventative and punitive measure. One notable case is that of Kozo

Akumoto, the international revolutionary and member of the Japanese Red Army, who was subjected to solitary confinement for nearly ten years in a specially constructed underground cell in Ramleh Prison. He was held alongside a Palestinian militant— whose name I can no longer recall.

Another case was the martyr Ibrahim Al-Ra'i, who was placed in those same isolation cells in1988after enduring nearly six months of resistance under interrogation and receiving multiple life sentences. He was later assassinated in the same cell after being accused of leading the military wing of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the northern West Bank and being responsible for several military operations against soldiers and settlers. His assassination in the isolation cell occurred just months after sentencing.

The Prison Service, under direct orders from the Shin Bet (Israel's internal intelligence agency), would also isolate leaders of the prisoner movement after each collective hunger strike staged by Palestinian prisoners. These leaders were confined either in solitary cells in Ramleh Prison, which had been specifically equipped for this purpose, or in prisons holding criminal prisoners.

This policy was notably enforced after the Ashkelon hunger strike in 1977, which lasted around 45 days, leading to the isolation of:

- *Mahdi Bseiso*
- *Abu Ali Shahin (from Fatah)*
- *Abdullah Al-Ajrami (from the Popular Front)*
- *Jabr Omar (from the Islamic current)*
- *Omar Al-Qassem (from the Democratic Front)*

Earlier, 40 political prisoners in Beersheba had been isolated in a special section following waves of protests and strikes in 1974, with the isolation lasting several months under extremely harsh conditions.

With the deepening and expansion of the struggle of the prisoner movement in defense of its rights, Israel worked to develop its isolation policy. In March 1978, it isolated approximately 80 prisoners whom it considered influential cadres in Beersheba Prison following a crackdown there, and transferred them to Tulkarem Prison, which had been emptied and prepared for this purpose. Some of them spent more than four years

isolation sections in Sharon, Kfar Yona, and the old Ramla prison, with some limited differences related to the age and modernity of the buildings. For example, some buildings like the Ramla isolation suffer from wall deterioration, with cells exhibiting strong humidity smells, rainwater leaks during winter, as well as rusted window and door bars and bunk beds.

As for the size of the cells in the new prison isolation sections such as Ayalon, Rimmonim, Gilboa, Rimmon, and Nafha, they are in better condition than their predecessors. The cells measure three meters wide by three meters long, with differences in the internal layout. The bunk beds are made of concrete or wood, considered safer by the prison administration than metal bunk beds, as prisoners might use metal to fashion sharp weapons. The bathroom is separated from the toilet and consists of a Western-style seated toilet rather than the squat toilets found in other cells, which helps reduce the presence of rats common in other sections. There are metal lockers with wooden shelves attached to the walls, holding shared necessities for the two prisoners, such as items from the canteen. In one corner, there is a concrete table used as a kitchen for cooking and food preparation, and sometimes for writing. The television is usually mounted on a metal, wooden, or sometimes concrete bracket fixed high on the cell wall.

Isolation sections generally suffer from poor ventilation, especially given the high humidity in the areas where most Zionist prisons are located—Hadarim, Rimmonim, Ramla, Ashkelon, Damun, Eshl Holikidar, Nafha, Rimmon, Ktzi'ot, Gilboa, Shata, and Gilboa. This negatively affects the prisoners' mental health even before impacting their physical health, particularly when combined with the deterioration of infrastructure due to prolonged use and high humidity. No sunlight or fresh air enters the cells, and rainwater leaks into the cell walls, causing continuous psychological distress to the prisoner. Rust consumes the metal parts of the cell, especially the bunk beds, doors, and windows. Insects—especially cockroaches—are widespread, along with rats.

The windows of isolation cells in all Zionist prisons are similar in size and design. Some are narrow, measuring about 80 cm in width. They are typically covered by a frame made of sheet metal fixed to the outer window frame, preventing air and sunlight from entering. Attached to this frame are two layers of steel: the first consists of vertical bars spaced 10

section in Ayalon Prison – Ramla. Alternatively, it might be part of the general prison building, like the isolation section in Sharon Prison.

Each isolation section consists of a number of cells that may reach up to 18. Despite formal differences among them in terms of size, ventilation, and sewage system, they are completely similar in essence. All of them were built and designed to serve as places for implementing the punishment of isolation. It is believed that a group of architects, security and police experts, as well as psychologists, participated in their design. The most isolated facility believed to fit this description is the new Ayalon Ramla isolation unit, opened in 2007. This unit was designed to deprive the isolated prisoner from seeing the outside space, prevent him from sensing some external environmental features, or hearing some distant prison sounds, or perceiving natural cosmic scenes such as sunrise or sunset, the moon, or some stars at night.

The size of the isolation cells is also quite similar, especially in older buildings, which are the narrowest. Their width does not exceed 1.25 meters, and their length is about 2.5 meters. The total space is practically taken up by the two-tiered metal bunk bed, which measures 80 cm wide and 1.8 meters long, in addition to the bathroom and toilet, which typically consist of a shower and a squat toilet combined, occupying no more than one square meter. These are separated from the rest of the cell by either a plastic curtain or a cement barrier about one meter high. In one corner of the cell is a washbasin, while in another corner there is a small table holding the television. Above, wooden shelves are fixed to the upper wall to accommodate the prisoner's belongings, including clothes, cooking utensils, and canned or packaged food that the prisoner buys monthly from the canteen.

This brief but precise description of the cell's size allows a person to imagine how impossible it is to move or walk within such a small space, even though the prisoner spends on average 23 hours a day in this confined area. The space becomes even tighter when there are two prisoners in the same cell. To imagine the extent of the suffering, it is enough to consider that the prisoner must cook, shower, relieve himself, and sleep in this cramped cell, which fills with cooking fumes, steam from bathing, and odors from the toilet.

This internal description of the cell applies almost universally to all in that prison.

In late 1979, as part of its attack on the leadership of the prisoner movement, the Israeli Prison Directorate began setting up a special prison to isolate what it called the "hard core" of the prisoner population. This measure targeted 80 detainees at the beginning of 1980, who were collected from several prisons and isolated in a newly built prison in the desert area of Mitzpe Ramon in southern Palestine. This prison was called Nafha Prison. Israel viewed this prison as a means to pressure the leadership of the prisoner movement by placing them in harsh conditions in small cells that housed only eight prisoners each, with extremely severe treatment and living standards.

But, as the saying goes, the spell backfired on the sorcerer: this group ended up forming a genuine leadership nucleus for both the prisoner movement and the popular movement in the occupied territories. Less than three months later, the prisoners in Nafha launched a general hunger strike to improve both their personal and collective living conditions in the prisons, and they prepared for it thoroughly.

The strike shook the ground under the feet of the occupation and ignited a wave of popular uprising that lasted for over a month. During the strike, the two prisoners Rassem Halawaa and Ali Al-Ja'fari were martyred, and later, Is-haq Maragha (Abu Jamal) also died from internal injuries sustained during forced feeding attempts by the prison guards, who tried to force-feed him after the third day of the strike.

The occupation resorted to forced feeding using tubes inserted through the nose to the stomach, administering what was known as the "Zonda meal," which consisted of milk, eggs, margarine, salt, and sugar. One can imagine the physical damage this caused, particularly as it was carried out while prisoners were resisting.

In short, the policies and procedures of the Prison Directorate began to shift toward a gradual implementation of the solitary confinement policy. After Nafha Prison failed to break the will of the "hard core" prisoners, the authorities established a collective isolation wing in Beersheba Prison, and linked this measure to legal regulations setting the isolation period at three months, subject to automatic renewal.

It is well-known that isolation prevents prisoners under such conditions from interacting with the rest of the prisoner movement,

except in rare cases such as medical transfers, court hearings, or being moved to another facility.

This policy was further reinforced with the establishment of an additional isolation wing in Nitzan Prison in Ramleh. Later, Hadareem Prison was built with a special architectural design, where no cell holds more than two prisoners. Although Hadareem included multiple wings categorized by degrees of isolation depending on the prisoners' classification, Wing 3 was the harshest, and it remains designated for political prisoners to this day, while the other sections have been converted to hold criminal prisoners.

II: The Policy of Isolation Before Legislation & Expansion

The practice of solitary confinement against some activists began to take root within the ranks of the Zionist intelligence administration and the prison directorate. Activists such as Kozo Akumoto were detained, whom the Israeli security authorities saw as a universal ideological phenomenon capable of shaking the security and stability of their racist entity if it spread, and would form the nucleus of a new revolutionary epicenter against oppression, arrogance, and capitalism in the world. Therefore, this epicenter had to be crushed in its cradle. The forces of darkness in the world conspired against the sources of this approach, starting with Che Guevara in Bolivia and Wadie Haddad in Palestine. Thus, the penalty of isolation was tightened against Akumoto as a first example, as well as against the Jewish nuclear scientist Mordechai Vanunu. We can imagine the conditions the two lived under, especially Kozo Akumoto, who did not know Arabic or Hebrew—before he learned them alone in isolation—and at the same time was ignorant of the environment he lived in, neither Japanese nor English. Added to this was the nature of

isolation by the intelligence services understands that many of these figures had been targets of assassination before they were arrested; when those attempts failed, the authorities continued their policy in order to achieve the same primary objective by other means.

IV: Examples of Isolation Sections

Isolation sections share general policies and living conditions that are similar to each other, varying relatively from one section to another based on spatial and temporal conditions. The types of isolation can be categorized into three forms:

1. Short-term solitary isolation, lasting several weeks as a disciplinary measure imposed on a prisoner due to some mistake he committed—from their point of view. The prisoner is sentenced to isolation for a specific period. The committee that issues this punishment is formed by the prison administration itself without referring to any formal legal procedures or regulations.
2. Collective isolation, consisting of an entire section whose main goal is to separate prison leaders from the rest of the prisoners, as is the case in Hadarim Prison.
3. Open solitary isolation, the harshest and most difficult type, where a prisoner is isolated alone in his cell, or at best with another prisoner under the best conditions. Communication with other prisoners is forbidden for an indefinite period, which may last up to 13 years, as well as contact with family, since the punishment may include bans on visits for several years.

The isolation section in any prison is considered a significant secret for the prison administration, which is responsible for it just as it is responsible for the rest of the prison. However, the isolation section is distinguished by independent conditions in terms of structural and architectural nature. It may be a standalone building, isolated from the rest of the sections, but still under the same administration's authority, such as the isolation

relieve his mental, emotional, or physical agony—creates a bitterness that is extremely difficult to endure. That difficulty is compounded when the observer is a militant who, by nature, came to prison carrying national and humanitarian ideals. But such bitterness is eventually internalized and processed as just another facet of the torture program designed for those in isolation.

The only resistance to such psychological destruction lies in enduring with patience and resolve. The enemy seeks to weaken you, humiliate you, and destabilize your sense of self. Your duty is to deny him that victory—to foil his plans and dismantle his strategies. To remain upright, steadfast, and with your head held high is to shift from a position of humiliation to one of dignity. It is to place the jailer in your own place.

Among the painful examples that illustrate the jailer's arrogance and disregard for Palestinian lives is the case of a newly isolated prisoner placed in the same cell with a mentally disturbed inmate known for violent tendencies. Despite being aware of this inmate's repeated attacks on cellmates, prison authorities placed them together anyway. One such case remains vivid in memory: the administration housed a prisoner with another who was psychologically unstable. In less than two days, a violent altercation erupted, ending with the mentally ill inmate being burned by boiling oil—after he had tried to pour it on his new cellmate.

And along the same lines — the same disregard and humiliation — the Zionist prison authorities placed two elderly prisoners together in a single cell even though the cell contained only one bunk bed. Neither of the two could use the upper bunk because it was difficult for them to climb up and down, so they were forced at times to take turns using the lower bunk or for one of them to sleep on the floor. The prison authorities did not relent until the two complained, supported by their comrades in the ward; their protests included refusing food. Only after more than two months were they transferred to a new isolation section where two ground-level beds were available, even though the problem could have been solved inside the same prison — either by replacing one prisoner with another or by moving one of them to a different cell.

In brief, the policy of isolation is marked by attempts to crush the isolated person physically and psychologically, even to the point of threatening his life. Anyone who reviews the names of those placed in the isolation section, both climatically and socially. The climate of the Ramla area is saturated with high humidity, and because the section is located several meters below ground level, the natural living conditions were harsh and unpleasant.

On the social level, his place of residence was determined to be a solitary confinement cell surrounded by a number of prisoners, the vast majority of whom were criminal offenders and collaborators who had fled from other prisons and were referred to as 'protection seekers,' along with one Palestinian freedom fighter from the Shamout family. He was suffering from neurological and psychological disorders due to the harsh conditions of his isolation.

If we also take into account Akumoto's psychological suffering due to the martyrdom of his comrades during the operation and his own survival — something that, in his view, conflicted with his martyrdom-oriented beliefs — we can understand the magnitude of the hardships he faced in solitary confinement. According to Israeli media claims, Akumoto had demanded a pistol to end his life in exchange for talking during interrogations.

In addition to all of this, the prison administration imposed a series of fascist procedures to deal with him, starting with denying him recreation time and only allowing him to leave his cell for one hour a day, during which he was shackled by both hands and feet — allegedly because he had assaulted a police officer. The prison administration also refused to remove his restraints even during his brief outings to the prison yard.

Despite these harsh conditions, the only break in his isolation came either when another prisoner was brought into solitary confinement, or during his transport to court — which allowed for limited social interaction. Freedom fighters who met him in isolation recounted that he never lost hope or trust in his comrades and their efforts to free him. Despite the hateful suffering he endured, he maintained a strong will and high morale, which was evident after his release, when he returned to his revolutionary activity, eventually leading to an attempt to re-arrest him in Lebanon.

Another example of fascist, racist treatment was the case of the freedom fighter Mordechai Vanunu.

It is well known that this humanitarian Jewish fighter of Eastern

(Mizrahi) origin had worked as an expert at the Israeli nuclear reactor. His ideological convictions were incompatible with Israel's pursuit of nuclear weapons, particularly as he had suffered from racial discrimination due to his class background and his origins among Eastern Jewish communities. He was also aware of the colonial role of the Israeli state and its crimes against our people.

When he tried to end his work, Israel fabricated a charge against him — that he had leaked secrets about the nuclear project. He managed to leave the country before Mossad agents tracked him down, kidnapped him in a European country, and brought him back to Israel. There, he was tried on charges of leaking nuclear secrets and contact with a foreign agent, and was sentenced to 18 years in prison under the pretext that he posed a threat to state security.

He was held in complete solitary confinement for 11 years, followed by restricted conditions until his release in 2004. Initially, he was placed in the solitary wing at Ramleh prison and was transferred between all solitary units in a special wing under extremely harsh conditions. Police subjected him to daily harassment and deprivation of his rights as a prisoner. All these measures were intended to psychologically, socially, and physically break him, and push him toward suicide — as happened with agent X in 2010.

The fascist, racist, imperialist mentality, steeped in hatred and devoid of any humanitarian impulse, justifies to itself any act or crime against any freedom fighter, as long as it serves its colonial project — even if the target is a Jew.

While the conditions of comrade Kozo Akumoto's detention allowed him some limited interaction with newcomers to the section — provided they spoke English — Vanunu was denied even this basic right. His cell was equipped with cameras tracking his every movement, and he was banned from meeting with any prisoner.

Anyone who followed his situation after his release would recognize the severe psychological and neurological damage he suffered due to solitary confinement.

The third example was recorded by Comrade Martyr Ibrahim Al-Ra'i, whom his comrades nicknamed the "Fucik of Palestine" (after the Czech anti-fascist journalist Julius Fučík), as he became a symbol of legendary

As a result, the relationship between the isolated militant—regardless of his name, status, or whether these individuals even know him—remains in a state of constant tension. This tension often manifests through verbal abuse, harassment, or even physical harm, such as throwing boiling water or hot oil. The criminal inmates, whether Arab or Jewish, are always waiting for a chance to pour these substances through their cell doors onto the militant as he passes by, perhaps on his way to recreation, legal visits, or medical checkups. What makes matters worse is that the militant is typically shackled at both the hands and feet, limiting his ability to move or protect himself.

Additionally, there are the constant arguments and loud shouting matches that may go on for hours between the criminal inmates, or involving prisoners seeking protection, or even those on the verge of psychological breakdown. When one of these inmates experiences a psychotic episode, he begins to rage, destroy everything in his cell, and sometimes even set it on fire. At this point, the prison's special suppression units intervene, using gas to subdue him—gas that inevitably seeps into neighboring cells, affecting all inmates indiscriminately. The inmate is then strapped to his bed, continuing to scream at anyone who attempts to calm him. This plunges the entire section into a state of prolonged tension for the rest of the day.

In other cases involving mentally unstable prisoners, a wave of frustration builds in the hearts of the militants. They understand that such individuals should be placed in specialized medical facilities, not in prison. Often, the situation could be alleviated simply by having another prisoner intervene or by fulfilling a small request—like providing cigarettes. But the arrogance of the jailer denies even these basic humanitarian measures.

Frequently, guards incite these mentally or security-compromised inmates to insult and curse the militants or the martyrs of the Palestinian revolution in exchange for a few cigarettes, deliberately provoking the political prisoners. When militants respond from behind their cell doors, the screaming and abuse intensify, as if the disturbed inmates find satisfaction in this reaction. Eventually, the newly arrived militant learns that the best response is simply not to respond at all.

In the end, witnessing a physically or mentally ill prisoner in desperate need of help—while being completely powerless to provide any aid to

If the use of shackles and frequent searches constitute the physical tools of oppression and humiliation, then there are many other methods aimed at breaking the prisoner's spirit — methods designed to constantly remind him that he is less than the jailer, that he is perpetually dependent on them, even for the simplest of needs. Whether it's requesting a dose of medication, or asking for a piece of paper, a pen, a needle and thread to mend a torn shirt — the prisoner is forced into a state of continuous subjugation.

The prisoners are fully aware that this policy serves multiple purposes. In addition to breaking their will and treating them with deep condescension — to the point of being treated like animals, such as being chained every time they leave the cell, or having food thrown at them like a dog — the goal is also to drown the prisoner in the mundane, exhausting details of daily survival. This causes him to become consumed with personal, trivial concerns, distracting him from the larger, collective issues — the political struggle and the national cause for which he is imprisoned.

As a result, many prisoners deliberately forgo these "small" needs so as not to submit to these efforts to humiliate and dominate them. One example is that of a fellow prisoner who chose to eat only raw vegetables for several months, refusing to comply with the prison administration's degrading methods — until they were forced to abandon their plan, having failed to break him.

Systematic Neural Destruction:

Anyone who becomes familiar with the details of life inside isolation cells can form a clear picture of what life is like for a prisoner in a section inhabited not only by political militants—people with conviction, opinion, and firm stance—but also by a mixture of dangerous Jewish and Arab criminal inmates. These may include individuals accused of murder, rape, or those who escaped from other prison sections where they were originally held on security-related charges but later deviated either morally or politically. Each of them has their own personal grievances with the prisoner movement and seeks to settle scores with any militant belonging to it.

steadfastness in interrogation chambers. He was interrogated in various cells and detention centers continuously for six months after being accused of leading the military wing of the Popular Front in the northern West Bank and of being responsible for organizing and motivating several daring operations against the occupation and its settlers.

The intelligence services used every possible method of interrogation against him, including arresting his family members — his brothers, sister, and mother — but he remained unbreakable. After failing to extract a confession from him, they presented him for trial based on confessions obtained from others, and he was sentenced to multiple life sentences. The Israeli intelligence services then transferred him to solitary confinement in Ramleh Prison — a decision that seems to have been the beginning of a plan to assassinate him, a decision previously made and prepared for.

When the Israeli intelligence claimed that Al-Ra'i had attempted suicide by hanging himself in one of the Moskobiya detention center's cells, it was later revealed that there were deep bruises on his body — evidence of torture that led to his death.

It is worth mentioning that this method had previously been used by Israeli intelligence to assassinate many freedom fighters during interrogations. To honor them and their spirits, and to remain truthful to their memory, the following list — published by the Palestinian Prisoners Club and the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs — names those who were martyred as a result of torture in Israeli prisons:

1. Yousef Al-Jabali – Nablus – Martyred on 04/01/1968 due to torture in Nablus Prison.
2. Fathi Abdel-Fattah Al-Natsheh – Hebron – Martyred on 28/07/1968 in Sarafand Prison.
3. Younes Mubarak Hussein Abu Sbeitan – Deir al-Balah – Martyred on 11/10/1968 in Sarafand Prison.
4. Qassem Abdullah Abu Aker – Beit Hanina, Jerusalem – Martyred on 23/03/1969 in Moskobiya Detention Center, Jerusalem.
5. Ahmad Muslim Abu Amira – Gaza – Martyred on 15/08/1969 in Gaza Prison.
6. Qassem Abu Khadra – Acre – Martyred on 04/11/1969 due to brutal torture.
7. Awn Saeed Hussein Al-Ar'eer – Gaza, Shuja'iyya – Martyred on 10/03/1970 in Majdal Prison.
8. Othman Badawi Othman Al-Bahsh – Nablus – Martyred on 28/08/1970 in Nablus Prison.
9. Deeb Mousa Nassif Shteiyeh – Salfit – Martyred on 25/10/1970 due to severe torture.

10. Hashem Ibrahim Hashem Kareem – Al-Shati Camp – Martyred on 22/12/1970 in Ramleh Prison due to torture.
11. Salem Al-Haj Mahmoud Hassan Safi – Dura – Martyred on 01/06/1971 in Hebron Prison.
12. Mustafa Mohammad Aqil Al-Darabe'e – Dura – Martyred on 22/02/1971 in Be'er Sheva.
13. Mohyeddin Suleiman Al-Awri – Ramallah – Martyred on 02/03/1971 in Ramallah Prison.
14. Mohammad Hassan Mahmoud Wishah – Al-Bureij Camp – Martyred on 01/09/1971 in Gaza Prison.
15. Hassan Al-Sawarka – Al-Arish – Martyred on 27/03/1972 in Ashkelon Prison.
16. Issa Mutlaq Abdel-Hamid – Qabalan – Martyred on 09/06/1972 due to torture.
17. Mustafa Al-Awawda – Hebron – Martyred on 27/07/1972 in Hebron Prison.
18. Nasreddin Fahmi Mohammad Al-Shakhshir – Nablus – Martyred on 02/05/1973 in Ashkelon Prison.
19. Fareez Hosni Asaad Tashtoush – Nablus – Martyred on 27/09/1973 in Nablus Prison.
20. Omar Shalabi – Aleppo, Syria – Martyred on 22/10/1973 in Ashkelon Prison.
21. Salem Mohammad Mustafa Abu Sitta – Khan Younis – Martyred on 13/10/1974 in Gaza Prison.
22. Fouad Mohammad Salama Hameed (Abu Hadeed) – Jabalia Camp – Martyred on 19/01/1976 in Ashkelon Prison.
23. Ahmad Deeb Ahmad Dahdoul – Salfit – Martyred on 21/03/1976 due to torture.
24. Mohammad Yousef Al-Khawaja – Ni'lin, Ramallah – Martyred on 02/06/1976 due to torture, then executed post-arrest.
25. Yousef Ahmad Hassan Kareem – Khan Younis – Martyred on 13/07/1978 in Gaza Prison.
26. Saeed Abu Sitta – Khan Younis – Martyred on 18/01/1979 in Gaza Prison.
27. Ya'qub Mohammad Dabbabesh – Gaza, Al-Nasr – Martyred on 28/10/1982 in Ashkelon Prison.
28. Hamza Omar Othman Abu Shoaib – Jama'in – Martyred on 25/02/1983 in Tulkarm Prison.
29. Khalil Ibrahim Abu Khadija – Ramallah – Martyred on 05/04/1983 in Ramallah Prison.
30. Qandil Kamel Abdel-Rahman Alwan – Jabalia – Martyred on 24/02/1988 due to medical neglect – Ashkelon Prison.
31. Ibrahim Mahmoud Al-Ra'i (Abu Al-Muntasir) – Qalqilya – Martyred on 11/04/1988 due to torture in isolation cells at Ramleh, followed by execution.
32. Nabil Mustafa Jameel Ibdah – Beit Hanina, Jerusalem – Martyred on 10/08/1988 in Moskobiya Interrogation Center.
33. Ibrahim Yasser Al-Motour – Hebron – Martyred on 21/10/1988 in Dhahiriya Detention Center.
34. Mahmoud Yousef Aliyan Al-Masri – Rafah – Martyred on 07/03/1989 in Gaza Prison.

the slot so the cuffs can be removed.

This inspection happens twice a day, and the same procedure is followed when the prisoner is taken out for exercise: he remains cuffed until reaching the yard entrance, where the cuffs are removed, only to be reapplied for the return. If the isolation is "double"—meaning two prisoners share a cell—and one of them needs to leave for any reason (such as meeting with a lawyer or going to the clinic), both prisoners are handcuffed, not just the one leaving. According to prison protocol, the isolated prisoner is seen as a dangerous criminal who must constantly be treated with extreme caution—and reminded of that at every turn.

This process becomes even more severe when the prisoner goes to a lawyer visit: he is shackled by both hands and feet, even if the distance to the meeting room is long—sometimes up to 500 meters, as in Ramon Prison. Upon arrival, only the handcuffs are removed; the feet remain shackled. One can imagine the pain and harm this causes the prisoner.

Sometimes, even after all this, the prisoner reaches the lawyer's room only for the jailer to deliberately declare a "security alert," triggering a lockdown of the prison.

The lawyer is forced to leave, and the prisoner is sent back to his cell in the same painful, humiliating process—without ever achieving the goal of the visit.

Beyond Routine Procedures, There Is Always the Exceptional

In addition to the daily routine procedures, there are always exceptional and punitive practices. For example, at the beginning of the solitary confinement of mujahid Hassan Salameh, jailers would raid his cell late at night, take him out with his hands cuffed behind his back, and leave him standing for hours on his feet. Meanwhile, they would ransack his cell and tamper with his belongings before returning him to it. At that time, his cell happened to be opposite the one holding Yigal Amir — the man convicted of assassinating Yitzhak Rabin — who was also subjected daily to similar punitive measures. This proximity only intensified the suffering of Hassan Salameh, adding psychological strain to his physical hardship.

psychologically affected by the jailer's tactics. Some suffered from severe and unstable mental states, some reached the brink of collapse, and others even descended into madness due to prolonged isolation. There are many examples of this.

The exceptions, however, are the steadfast militant leaders—those deeply rooted in their ideological and revolutionary commitment.

Solitary Confinement... As a Tool of Oppression and Humiliation

Through the daily procedures imposed on the isolated prisoner, one can clearly sense the degree of vindictiveness reflected in these practices, and the objectives that the Israeli intelligence seeks to achieve against the struggling prisoners. From the moment a prisoner enters the prison—before even reaching the isolation unit— he is subjected to a thorough search, sometimes involving a physical (body) search. His belongings are sorted between what is allowed inside the cell and what is prohibited. Many of his already limited possessions are confiscated and stored in the prison's security room.

That same day, a security officer accompanied by a police team conducts another inspection, which can last for hours—even though the prisoner's belongings don't warrant such extensive time. Sometimes, the very next day, an external team arrives to carry out yet another inspection. During this, the prisoner is handcuffed— either from the front or the back, depending on prison regulations—and taken out of the cell, where he remains in restraints until the search is over. This entire process is repeated multiple times throughout the period of solitary confinement.

As part of the daily prison routine, after the morning count, the jailer inspects the window and front of the cell. Before beginning, the prisoner is handcuffed through a small opening in the middle of the cell door, which is specifically designed for this purpose. This opening is also used to pass in basic items like meals or medication. In other words, the door only opens for searches or for the brief outdoor break ("fura"), and remains locked during the rest of the day. After the inspection ends, the prisoner returns to his cell, and once again must extend his hands through

35. Jamal Mohammad Abdul-Aty Abu Sharakh – Al-Shati Camp – Martyred on 03/12/1989 in Gaza Prison.
36. Khaled Kamel Sheikh Ali – Gaza, Al-Rimal – Martyred on 12/12/1989 in Gaza Prison.
37. Atiyah Abdul-Aty Al-Za'anin – Beit Hanoun – Martyred on 13/11/1990 in Gaza Prison.
38. Ali Hassan Abdel-Halim Al-Shahid – Tulkarm – Martyred on 08/06/1991 in the Civil Administration Headquarters.
39. Sami Nouman Suleiman Zaarab – Khan Younis – Martyred on 22/08/1991 in Gaza Prison.
40. Mustafa Abdullah Al-Akawi – Jerusalem – Martyred on 04/02/1992 in Hebron Prison.
41. Mohammad Suleiman Hussein Baris – Khan Younis Camp – Martyred on 29/06/1992 in Ramleh Prison.
42. Hazem Mohammad Abdul Rahim Eid – Al-Am'ari Refugee Camp – Martyred on 09/07/1992 due to torture – Hebron Prison.
43. Mustafa Mahmoud Mustafa Barakat – Anabta – Martyred in August 1992 due to torture – Tulkarm Prison.
44. Samir Mohammad Khamees Salama – Rafah – Martyred on 15/02/1993 in solitary confinement cells of Be'er Sheva Prison due to torture.
45. Ayman Saeed Hassan Nassar – Deir al-Balah – Martyred on 02/04/1993 due to torture – Gaza Prison.
46. Mohammad Salameh Al-Jundi – Al-Arroub – Martyred on 10/05/1993 due to torture – Hebron Prison.
47. Abdul-Samad Salman Hareizat – Yatta – Martyred on 25/04/1995 due to torture – Moskobiya Interrogation Center.
48. Khaled Ali Ayyesh Abu Diya – Bethlehem – Martyred on 21/05/1997 due to torture – Moskobiya Interrogation Center.
49. Nidal Zakaria Abu Srour – Aida Refugee Camp, Bethlehem – Martyred on 29/01/1998 due to torture – Moskobiya Interrogation Center.
50. Raed Mahmoud Ahmad Abu Hamed – Al-Eizariya – Martyred on 16/04/2010 after being assaulted in solitary confinement and left without medical care – Eshel Prison, Be'er Sheva.
51. Arafat Shaheen Jaradat – Sa'ir, Hebron – Martyred on 23/02/2013 due to torture in Jalameh and Megiddo prisons.
52. Raed Abdessalam Al-Jaabari – Hebron – Martyred on 09/09/2014 due to torture at Soroka Hospital; he had been detained since 26/07/2014 in Eshel Prison under interrogation.

The Israeli intelligence (Shin Bet) repeatedly claimed that many of these deaths were suicides.

• *In the case of Arafat Jaradat, they claimed he died of a heart attack, despite clear signs of torture.*

• *Similarly, the elderly and resilient Sheikh Mohyeddin Suleiman Al-Awri, from Beit 'Ur al-Tahta, who died in Ramallah's cells in 1971, was said to have died from a respiratory crisis.*

Yet the list of such cases continues to grow.

What Does Solitary Confinement Mean?

Solitary confinement can be defined as placing the prisoner in a spatial environment marked by physical narrowness, devoid of all forms of life and reducing them to their absolute minimum—or even below that—especially when it comes to aspects of social and human life. The goal is to keep the prisoner under constant siege and isolation by reducing both physical and human dimensions to their lowest possible limits. This forced lifestyle of confinement becomes imposed on the body and senses, eventually aiming to besiege the prisoner's mental and cognitive abilities.

It involves detaining the prisoner alone—or with one other inmate—in a dark, cramped cell no larger than 1.5 by 2.5 meters. These are filthy, unclean cells, with walls that constantly emit dampness and mold. Inside the cell is an old floor toilet, from which rats and rodents emerge, and there is no separation between the toilet area and the rest of the cell.

There is a single window, more like a hole in the wall than an actual ventilation window. It is covered with a thick metal plate to prevent escape—or even the entry of fresh air. The cell is lit by a fluorescent bulb. The prisoner may spend a year, two years, or even eleven years or more in this place.

On top of this harsh punishment, further additional penalties may be imposed on the prisoner in solitary, such as:

• *Being denied contact with other prisoners.*
• *Cutting off drinking water and preventing showers.*
• *Banning visits from family members and lawyers.*
• *Blocking the sending or receiving of letters.*
• *Denying access to the prison canteen.*
• *Confiscation of personal belongings such as books, papers, or electrical devices.*

placing the dog beside him, forcing him to sit at the very edge of the seat as a form of control. Upon arrival at the court or hospital, the prisoner is placed in a special cell or private room.

This measure came as part of a strategy to tighten the social isolation of the prisoner, stemming from the understanding that the human being is a social creature, whose essence lies in social relationships—these are the source of life and psychological balance. The jailer understands this well: just as a branch withers and dies when separated from the tree that nourishes it, so too does the human suffer when cut off from the community that sustains him.

It is true that the natural, biological membership of other living creatures differs from the social membership that is unique to humans. And it is also true that humans possess an extraordinary ability to adapt to objective and even extreme conditions—perhaps more so than any other living being. Yet this does not prevent the physical and psychological harm that inevitably results from being separated from the group.

Even within the isolation unit itself, the prisoner is prevented from engaging in social interaction or communication between cells—such as speaking from a distance. These whispered conversations often happen behind the back of the jailer, and anyone caught in the act of speaking with a neighboring cellmate may face punishment. Nevertheless, the human, political, and national necessity of communication, consultation, and maintaining resilience, willpower, and loyalty to the collective and its broader goals drive isolated prisoners to maintain both emotional and, when possible, physical connection with the group—regardless of the risks these actions may bring.

This is echoed by Czech communist leader Julius Fučík, who emphasized that this connection is the essential secret to a fighter's resilience in the dungeons of torture and interrogation. He maintained that the attempt to separate the individual from the group during interrogation aims to weaken him, isolate him, and ultimately break him—turning him into a tool to undermine the collective and its values.

Despite this, and despite the ability of many isolated prisoners to resist this method and emerge from the experience stronger and more determined, some fighters who lacked certain methods of resilience—and who were not deeply grounded in the values of justice and struggle—were

since isolation laws prohibit any exchange of items between prisoners, and anyone who tries to smuggle items to assist another prisoner is punished. This issue has severe consequences, particularly for isolated prisoners suffering from psychological disorders, especially due to the lack of cigarettes. Readers of these lines are free to imagine the kinds of interactions that may arise between such prisoners and the guards—and the level of distress this can cause for a mentally ill prisoner. These situations can escalate to the use of tear gas or shackling the prisoner to the bed for several days. All of this forms part of a systematic process aimed at destroying the prisoner's nervous system and mental stability over time.

Solitary Confinement... The Ultimate Form of Torture

In addition to the illegality of the practice of solitary confinement—an act that blatantly violates all conventions that prohibit torture—it is considered a deadly form of torture. In reality, it surpasses all other forms of torture inflicted on human beings, even if it may appear otherwise. This is evident in the attempt to carry out a form of social execution or assassination: the goal of solitary confinement is to sever all ties between the isolated prisoner and their surrounding social environment, both inside and outside the prison.

The deprivation of visits, cessation of interaction with other prisoners, and reduction of time allowed outside for exercise are not precautionary measures to neutralize a supposedly dangerous inmate. Rather, they are calculated steps toward inflicting social death.

In an escalation of these measures, the prison authorities, under direction from intelligence agencies, have resorted to transporting the isolated prisoner in a special vehicle to court or hospital only in cases of extreme necessity. He is accompanied by a specialized police unit that ensures he comes into contact with no one. Guards deliberately treat the isolated prisoner in a manner that highlights his perceived danger: assigning a special escort team, using trained police dogs specifically selected for such tasks, preventing the prisoner from moving in his seat by

- *Prohibiting outdoor time (recreation/foura).*
- *Imposing fines and disciplinary punishments.*
- *Beating with batons and firing tear gas.*
- *Storming the solitary cell, and chaining the prisoner's hands to the bed with iron shackles.*

Solitary Confinement: A Proven Method to Break Wills

As the intensity of the Palestinian struggle increased and resistance operations expanded, Israeli repression intensified, including the policy of solitary confinement.

With the outbreak of the First Intifada in December 1987, the number of detainees rose sharply—reaching an average of about 13,000 prisoners at a time. Naturally, this led to an escalation in Israeli repression and an expansion in its methods, including assassination, arrest, bone-breaking, and deportation.

As part of this policy, the occupation authorities innovated new ways to suppress the prisoners' movement. New detention centers were opened:

- *In Gaza: Ansar 2*
- *In the Negev: Ansar*
- *Megiddo, Dhahiriya, and Al-Far'a*

The number of prisoners in Ansar 3 alone reached around 10,000 detainees, who lived under very difficult conditions, deprived of the most basic human needs— whether due to the harsh climate or the lack of essential life necessities (physical, social, family visits, food, medical care), in addition to systematic repression.

No significant improvement occurred in their living conditions until after 1992, and only due to their continuous struggle and legal efforts. Only then were monthly family visits allowed, and prisoners were permitted to bring in a limited variety of food items. They were also allowed to purchase a few essentials from the prison canteen.

As we've said, these improvements were the direct result of the prisoners' struggle, backed by mass movements, unions, human rights, legal, and political support from outside the prisons.

As for the central prisons where detainees expected to receive sentences longer than five years were transferred, the Israeli Prison Service intensified its repressive measures to prevent them from participating in directing or leading the popular uprising from within prison.

Within this framework, the policy of solitary confinement was formally implemented against key figures of the Palestinian national movement and field leaders of the Intifada.

To avoid confusion between the application of this policy against Palestinian freedom fighters, whom Israel considers leaders of the national or prisoners' struggle—believing their presence among other detainees poses a threat— and other cases where the prison administration was forced to isolate individuals for reasons unrelated to those of isolating political activists, the following distinctions must be made:

1. The prison administration was sometimes compelled to isolate prisoners who had escaped from shared prison rooms, for security reasons. Some of these individuals were later investigated and convicted of collaborating with the Israelis, while others sought protection from the administration fearing retaliation or interrogation by fellow prisoners, due to certain behavioral concerns noted about them. There were also a few cases involving ethical or moral failures, where individuals were unable to adhere to the rules of communal living and the internal regulations that govern prison society and the prisoners' movement. It's important to note that some of those who sought protection from the prison administration —whether for security or moral reasons—did so before being definitively judged guilty or innocent. Some of them had even been present since the early stages of the Palestinian prisoners' movement.

The Israeli intelligence services used some of these individuals as informants, assigning them various tasks such as:

- *Extracting confessions from newly arrested prisoners*
- *Attempting to recruit detainees as informants for the intelligence services*
- *Entrapping prisoners in unethical or immoral behavior*
- *Two religious books,*
- *Two educational books,*
- *And the Quran.*

While the prison administration claims that the isolated prisoner can exchange books from the prison library, access to the library is sporadic and unreliable. Furthermore, the law allows the prisoner's family to send two books per month via the Red Cross, but this is routinely obstructed by delaying permission for the Red Cross representative to deliver the books.

The same applies to Arabic newspapers, such as a paper that is allowed in other prisons—which is banned in solitary by an administrative decision that is hard to justify.

All of this is clearly aimed at shrinking the prisoner's mental and cultural world, cutting them off from any meaningful connection with the living world, even on a cultural level. The goal is to disable their memory, confine their attention solely to the minute details of prison life, and prevent them from thinking freely—because free thought might be considered a threat to public safety, state security, or even a form of terrorism.

As with books and recreation time, the same restrictions apply to other rights. For example, while the law theoretically allows a prisoner to bring in a private doctor for treatment, this right is consistently obstructed through various tactics, and there has never been a recorded case where the Israeli Prison Service approved such a request for an isolated prisoner, no matter how ill they were.

In theory, the prisoner is allowed to purchase their personal needs from the prison canteen (kantina) twice a month. However, in reality, many of the required items are not delivered—either because they're unavailable, or due to the laziness of the guardresponsible for processing the orders. Sometimes, the issue lies in the prisoner's account lacking funds on the designated purchase day, as families often face difficulties in transferring money to the prisoner's account on time. In such cases, the rule becomes: "If you miss the market, you don't shop," and the prisoner must wait another two weeks for the next opportunity. Naturally, the prisoner is forbidden from seeking help from a neighboring cellmate,

other rights turns this measure into a blatant violation of the law, making it a first-degree punitive isolation.

In solitary confinement, numerous practices imposed on the isolated prisoner undermine the authorities' claims that they are abiding by their own regulations.

For example, the prisoner's recreation time (yard time) and ability to exercise are reduced from several hours—as stipulated in agreements signed between prisoners and the Israeli Prison Service—to just one hour per day. This completely contradicts the claim that isolation is not a punishment. Even that one hour is often undermined by various tricks:

- *Sometimes the alarm siren is suddenly sounded, declaring a "state of emergency";*
- *At other times, the prisoner is forced to choose between seeing their lawyer or going out for yard time;*
- *On other occasions, it's claimed that the officer responsible for escorting the prisoner is "absent";*
- *And sometimes, the decision is simply based on the mood of the guard that day.*

All this shows that the infringement of prisoners' rights is intentional and systematic, part of a carefully planned isolation regime. Reducing the already limited hour of recreation clearly aims to harm the prisoner's health and morale, which constitutes a deliberate, long-term threat to their life.

In many cases, the isolated prisoner is punished further by being taken out to the yard with hands and feet shackled in iron chains. In the first stage, both hands and feet are shackled; in the second stage, the prisoner is kept shackled until reaching the yard, where their hands are unshackled but their feet remain chained throughout the entire recreation period, and are only removed upon return to the cell.

Prisoners are not allowed to meet or see each other during yard time. Each prisoner is brought out alone to an empty yard.

In solitary confinement, prisoners are not allowed to possess more than two books in their cell, in addition to the Quran. This is despite the fact that the law grants prisoners the right to own eight books:

- *Three general cultural books,*

Because of these activities, the prison authorities established special, disguised sections specifically for these collaborators. Prisoners referred to these sections as: "Bird rooms" or "Rooms of Shame."

2. Medical Cases with Psychological Disorders. These are prisoners suffering from mental health disorders who have failed to adapt to the conditions of social life inside the prisons. Although such cases have been rare within the prisoners' movement, the movement has often succeeded in integrating them into the communal life of the prison, including those with physical illnesses, such as the paralyzed. However, some remain beyond hope of recovery. Instead of providing them with proper treatment, placing them in psychiatric hospitals, or releasing them due to the deterioration of their mental state, the Israeli Prison Service has kept them in solitary confinement, where they are constantly vulnerable to abuse, especially during episodes of mental crisis. In some instances, these individuals have been shackled to their beds for days, with their restraints only removed during bathroom breaks or meals. Their continued presence in solitary serves a dual function: a form of punishment for them, and as a psychological tool of torture for other prisoners who are also held in isolation.

3. Criminal Prisoners. These are present in all prison sections. Some of them are key figures in underworld organizations and criminal families, and the Prison Service fears placing them in regular sections. Others are escapees or individuals in crisis. This mix forms thesocial fabric of solitary confinement wings, along with notorious right-wing extremist cells who have committed crimes against Palestinians. This includes individuals convicted of assassinating Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, most notably Yigal Amir.

It's important to note that criminal prisoners retain all their rights as inmates, with the only restriction being the duration of outdoor time ("recreation/foura"), which is now equal to that granted to political prisoners. They still enjoy:

- *Phone call privileges*
- *Family visits, including*

• *Private and extended (open) visitations*

4. Special Cases: Leaders of the Prisoners' Movement and Armed Groups. This group is limited in number. Some were placed in solitary confinement immediately after interrogation, while others were isolated due to their activism within the prison, by decision of the Prison Directorate. In such cases, the duration of their isolation was not always long. However, in certain instances, the decision came from the intelligence services after the prisoner had already spent time in prison. In these cases, the duration of solitary confinement can be described as "an open-ended sentence," to borrow a mathematical term. Some have spent more than thirteen years in solitary confinement, as in the cases of Mujahideen Mahmoud Issa and Hassan Salameh.

III: The Legal Framework for Legislating the Policy of Solitary Confinement In International Law

Since its establishment, the occupying power's government has generally disregarded the law in its treatment of Palestinian prisoners and has not adhered to the implementation of the International Convention Against Torture, despite being a signatory to it. Nor has it abided by other international agreements and laws. Instead, it has carried out its repressive policies against them without limitation. The policy of solitary confinement, as practiced by the Israeli Prison Service, poses one of the gravest threats to the physical and psychological well-being of prisoners, resulting from their isolation from the outside world. This constitutes a serious violation of international human rights law and international

confinement— meaning two prisoners in the same cell—this is based on the Zionist isolation law, which stipulates that a court may isolate a prisoner in single solitary confinement without any cellmate for only six months. If there is a need to extend the isolation beyond that period, two prisoners must be housed together.

The representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is allowed to visit the isolated prisoner in their cell once every two months as a form of cosmetic oversight to give the appearance that isolation conditions are being monitored—despite the clear violations of international law. During these visits, the Red Cross representative may bring permitted clothing, books on occasion, and letters from the prisoner's family outside the prison. These letters are then handed to the prison administration for inspection and censorship.

However, the prison administration might never deliver the letter to the prisoner, or they might delay handing it over based on their mood or internal policies regarding the prisoner. These visits offer the prisoner only emotional sympathy from the Red Cross representative, who is strictly forbidden from discussing any political or security matters with the isolated prisoner. The conversation is limited to daily life and health-related topics. Even though the prisoner understands the limited role and lack of influence the Red Cross holds, these visits still provide a small but meaningful relief—offering a break from the crushing monotony and psychological pressure of isolated life.

Solitary Confinement... A Harsh Stripping of the Prisoner's Rights

As soon as a prisoner is transferred to the solitary confinement units, a parallel decision is issued to deny them family visits for a period of three months, which is then automatically extended. This is despite the fact that the regulations governing prisoners' lives clearly state that solitary confinement is not a punitive measure, but rather a precautionary procedure related to the prisoner's specific circumstances. The prisoner, during the period of isolation, is supposed to retain all legal rights granted to them by law. However, in practice, the denial of family visits and many

to the Shin Bet's (Shabak's) decisions against detainees.

Also, no isolated prisoner has ever been released from solitary confinement by a decision of this court. Any prisoner who ended their confinement did so not by court decision, but due to the demands of the prisoner movement after engaging in hunger strikes.

The formal legal process is completed through routine, humiliating—sometimes even laughable—procedures. A few days before the court session, the prison doctor visits the isolated prisoner to ask about their health. Then, the social worker passes by the prisoner for just a few seconds to inquire about their condition. These visits are followed by reports from the doctor and the social worker, which always state that the prisoner's physical and psychological condition is suitable for continued solitary confinement.

Additionally, the intelligence officer of the "prison compound" supervising the prisoner attaches a sworn statement affirming that a responsible committee within the compound reviewed the issue of the prisoner's isolation, discussed their condition, and concluded that they still pose a threat to public security. For several reasons—some of which are listed—they recommend extending the prisoner's isolation for another period. Naturally, the purpose of this statement is to cover up and obscure the role of the intelligence services, which are the actual decision- makers behind the isolation.

Finally, if the court is ever forced to issue a decision contrary to the wishes of the intelligence services, it does so in a vague and ambiguous manner. For example, a prisoner who is in shared isolation (with another detainee) might request to be held alone in solitary confinement for personal reasons—even though single confinement is far harsher than shared confinement. This may stem from a lack of compatibility between cellmates or serious ideological or personal conflicts. Still, the court issues a decision that goes against the prisoner's own request.

Solitary confinement is not intended to suit the comfort of the prisoner but rather serves the intelligence service's objectives: breaking the prisoner's will, crushing their morale, and stripping them of their humanity—leaving them utterly broken, detached from all the values, principles, and sense of self-worth they once believed in.

Although most isolated prisoners are kept in shared solitary

humanitarian law.

Accordingly, the practice of solitary confinement in Israeli prisons can be considered a violation of Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, both of which categorically prohibit torture and cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The prisoner's disconnection from the outside world is considered a violation of humane standards, which affirm the right of the prisoner to communicate with the outside world, especially with their family.

Solitary confinement also constitutes a violation of international humanitarian law, particularly when considering the conditions under which Palestinian prisoners are held in isolation. This is clearly addressed in Articles 91 and 92 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which concerns the treatment of civilians during times of war and occupation. Furthermore, Article 76 of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention explicitly prohibits the individual or collective transfer and deportation of people from occupied territories to the territory of the occupying power.

International laws and conventions have also prohibited the occupying state from imposing any punishments that undermine the dignity or humanity of prisoners. This is affirmed by the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War of 1948, as well as the provisions of international humanitarian law, human rights legislation, the Convention Against Torture, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

With the growing criticism of its policies by international legal institutions and human rights organizations—both local and international, including Israeli organizations such as B'Tselem, the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, and others—and the exposure of torture policies and other serious violations against prisoners, all of this forced successive Israeli governments to enact legislation that both regulates and simultaneously conceals its repressive practices and violations. These began particularly with regulations related to interrogation following the torture scandal involving Izzat Nafsu.

As for the Landau Commission, which was formed by the Knesset, it issued formal guidelines to regulate the interrogation process, essentially legalizing what was termed "moderate physical and psychological

pressure." It even included a clause concerning the treatment of prisoners in the official Prison Service regulations— referred to as the legal regulation of the Prison Authority—which allows for solitary confinement of a prisoner for a period determined by necessity, if the prisoner is deemed, under standard detention conditions, to pose a threat to public or state security.

Israel—which, notably, is the only country in the world that legislates human rights violations against prisoners—enacted the Prison Authority Law in 1971. This law allows for the solitary confinement of prisoners under the pretext of security concerns. Over time, solitary confinement became a standard policy in all Israeli prisons, with each prison director authorized to isolate any prisoner for a specified period without needing to refer to the courts—courts that are, fundamentally, merely formal and lack genuine judicial authority.

Later, in 2006, this law was amended to broaden the criteria for holding detainees in solitary confinement and to expand the powers of those authorized to impose this punishment. This was done through the invention of the term "secret file", a file compiled by the intelligence service in accordance with its own interests. This term has since been used tocover all forms of legal violations, including administrative detention, solitary confinement, deportation, and even assassination. The situation has deteriorated to the point that all levels of courts in the Israeli system now use this term, including the High Court of Justice — which, from now on, we must omit the word "justice" from its name, because there can be no justice without the accused knowing the charges against them, nor the lawyer being able to defend against charges they do not know.

Subsequently, the Israeli intelligence services drafted a law to legalize the solitary confinement of Palestinian prisoners, under the name: "The Shalit Law".

Solitary Confinement: A Legislated Policy in Zionist Institutions

As part of its definition of the policy of solitary confinement, the Landau Commission stated that the isolation of a prisoner is not a

decision comes from the intelligence services, outside the authority of the Prison Service. In this session, the prisoner is asked about the vague reasons for their isolation and is informed that the Prison Service Directorate, through the regional prison grouping the prisoner is assigned to, will hold another hearing a week later to decide whether to continue the confinement or end it.

After a week, the mentioned hearing takes place—typically led by the deputy head of the "regional grouping"—who informs the prisoner that there is security information being verified, and if it proves accurate, the isolation will continue. If it is found to be incorrect, the confinement will be lifted, and the prisoner will return to the regular prison sections.

If the prisoner is in solitary confinement alone (i.e., isolated from all others), their file is referred to the central court in the geographical area where the prisoner is located after six months. A request is submitted to the court by the regional intelligence unit to extend the prisoner's isolation for a specified period. The isolated prisoner has the right to object to the request, either through a lawyer or independently. The court may also appoint a lawyer to defend the prisoner.

However, the court—or more accurately, the performance—is conducted based on a secret file submitted by the intelligence services. Only the judge is allowed to review its contents; neither the prisoner nor their lawyer is given access to it. This file typically includes the indictment under which the prisoner was sentenced, along with a set of information or reasons justifying the intelligence service's request to extend the solitary confinement. Naturally, in such a court, the lawyer is not given any meaningful right to defend their client, and the extension is granted automatically for the duration requested by the intelligence services through the regional committee. This farce has led many isolated detainees to boycott these courts.

A few days after the isolation begins, the prisoner receives aseparate decision denying them visitation rights for a period of three months. They are entitled to appeal this decision before the central court. It is worth noting that this so-called "central court" has never rejected a request by the public prosecutor throughout its existence to extend the solitary confinement of any prisoner. This confirms without doubt that the court is nothing more than a formal, functional tool used to give a legal façade

prisoner. Nor have they responded to any objection submitted by any Palestinian prisoner or their lawyers in court—even on a single aspect of solitary confinement life, such as denying the prisoner visits or denying treatment to a prisoner suffering from illness.

Is Solitary Confinement a Punishment?

Solitary confinement, in its general form, is supposed to be used as a disciplinary punishment for political prisoners and criminal inmates due to a violation committed inside the prison. In such cases, the prisoner is placed alone in a cell and denied access to any necessities except for their clothing, mattress, and blanket, for a period not exceeding 14 days. This period is to be divided into two parts: 7 days in isolation, after which the prisoner returns to their regular section for a break, and then is placed back in solitary for another 7 days. That is, a detainee cannot be isolated for 14 consecutive days. This authority is granted to the prison director under Article 56 of the Israeli Prison Authority Law of 1971.

However, when it comes to the solitary confinement of prisoners for political reasons—which is the issue at hand—all Zionist and international laws are disregarded, particularly in terms of clarifying the charges and the length of time the prisoner spends in solitary, which can extend to years without even specifying the charge. The alleged reasons for isolation usually revolve around "security of the region and the public," "state security," "prison security," "preserving the safety and health of the detainee or other detainees," "preventing real harm to the discipline or order of life in the prison," or preventing violent offenses, especially those linked to organized crime or drug offenses.

Initially, isolated detainees are allowed visits "according to regulations," but later, this right is stripped from political detainees by a decision attached to the solitary confinement order.

As for the steps and procedures that fall under the scope of legal treatment, they proceed as follows:

After 48 hours of solitary confinement, the prison administration holds a hearing before the deputy director of the prison where the solitary wing is located. This session is purely formal, especially since the deputy director often has no knowledge of the reasons for the isolation. The

punishment, but rather a preventive measure necessitated by security needs, claiming that the isolated prisoner is not deprived of their fundamental rights as stipulated by law. However, these texts are deliberately ambiguous. For example, the Israeli Prison Service considers the right to visitation—stipulated in its regulations as once every two months—as the full extent of the prisoner's right. Any additional visits are treated as a privilege that was agreed upon with the prisoners—thanks, of course, to the struggles of the prisoners' movement.

As for the daily yard time (fura), it is limited to one hour, and any additional time that prisoners manage to obtain is also considered a privilege, according to the prison authorities. The law also permits Israeli occupation courts to issue decisions placing detainees in solitary confinement for six months in a single-person cell, or for 12 months in a cell with another detainee. Moreover, the court is legally authorized to extend the prisoner's isolation for additional and even indefinite periods, based on the pretext of the so-called "secret file."

In order to frame the issue as legal, the procedure for solitary confinement formally goes through several legal stages, most of which are superficial and merely procedural, as the matter ultimately depends on the political level. In fact, the decision to isolate a prisoner is not made by judges, but by Shin Bet (Shabak) security officers.

The legal process begins with the prisoner being suddenly informed that they are being transferred to another prison. A prisoner may be transferred directly to solitary confinement after the interrogation ends, as happened with prisoners such as Mazen Malasa, who spent his entire six-and-a-half-year sentence in isolation, and others such as Abdullah Barghouti, Ibrahim Hamed, Darar al-Sisi, Mahawesh Naimat, and Atwa al-Amour—all of whom were placed in isolation during the first six months, a period that can be decided solely by the prison director or their deputy, without needing to refer the matter to court. This is within their authority to impose a punishment of up to two months, extendable without judicial review.

After the initial two-month period, the isolation is automatically renewed every two months, without formal hearings or court sessions, until it reaches six months. After that, the prisoner is moved to dual isolation (shared confinement), and the cycle repeats for another six

months.

Once the initial six-month solitary confinement period or the one-year dual isolation period ends, the prisoner's case must be brought before a court. At this point, the isolation is given the form of a judicial ruling by the court, which holds routine extension sessions devoid of any due process, under the pretext of the secret file. The prisoner is not informed of the charges against them and therefore cannot defend themselves. The court simply accepts the prosecutor's claim that the prisoner is a "threat to state and public security."

In reality, this phrase—though placed within a legal framework—carries no actual legal substance or standards.

Solitary Confinement... A Blatant Violation of International Law

Here we find a clear violation of international law, and in contrast, the world remains silent about this violation. If arresting someone on the grounds of resisting occupation constitutes a violation of international law, then imposing solitary confinement as a punishment constitutes a double violation. Even if we overlook the blatant violation of international law regarding arresting someone on charges of resisting occupation in all its forms—especially with regard to political, ideological, or opinion-based charges—the legal rules do not allow punishing a prisoner twice for the same charge: once with imprisonment and again with solitary confinement. This applies to all solitary confinement decisions made by the occupation authorities against Palestinian fighters. Transferring a fighter from interrogation cells after completing harsh interrogation sessions—which involve tens or even hundreds of forms of torture—directly to solitary confinement cells is an additional punishment not permitted by international or local law applicable in the occupied country.

Perhaps the cases of the two fighters, Ibrahim Hamid and Abdullah Barghouti, confirm this violation. After several months of interrogation and their files being referred to the military court, they were directly placed in solitary confinement sections, which in itself is an additional punishment or, at best, a punishment based on "intentions and suspicions." These two fighters never lived in the regular sections; therefore, there is nothing that can be considered evidence or justification for detaining them in solitary confinement. They did not commit any "crime" or violation that would threaten the security of the public, the entity, or the prisoners according to reports used by the occupation judiciary. Detaining them is a prior condemnation of intentions that have not yet been tested, which contradicts the legal principle that the accused is innocent until proven guilty. However, in the Zionist entity, a Palestinian is considered guilty unless proven otherwise.

Reviewing many cases transferred to solitary confinement, most of them did not spend weeks or several months in regular prison life before being subjected to open-ended solitary confinement without a specific time limit. This indicates that solitary confinement decisions were premeditated and ready in advance, regardless of whether there was a crime justifying it or not. Thus, it is a retroactive punishment for the prisoner.

If we assume that the law allows any authority to transfer any political or criminal prisoner to solitary confinement in case of violating something that threatens security, this assumption is nullified by the fact that everyone accused of this violation was brought before a court due to their violation inside the prison, especially if it posed a threat to internal prison security. The issuance of a harsh ruling as long as the prisoner has not experienced conduct that poses an internal threat justifying their separation from other detainees, then what is the justification for punishing them with solitary confinement? Other than that, it is merely an expression of a predetermined intention to punish them.

Also, as the law stipulates, every punishment must have a defined time limit, not be open-ended as is the case with solitary confinement. The prevailing practice in Israeli repression is that those placed in solitary confinement appear before a special court that repeatedly extends their confinement dozens of times, sometimes reaching thirteen years or more, as in the case of the fighter "Fannouno." Based on the same file, and without any new evidence allowing the court to extend their confinement.

Moreover, these special courts dealing with Palestinian prisoners' solitary confinement cases have never acquitted or rejected any request made by intelligence or the representing authority against any Palestinian